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Ferris State University
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Life in the bullpen
 Ferris junior pitcher Megan Hiler writes from the mound

Ferris junior pitcher Megan Hiler warms up in the bullpen before a game in the 2015 season.

Megan Hiler
 Torch Reporter

The first time I threw a pitch in a game was the first time I threw a pitch... ever. I was 10 years old and I played for the best Green Gators. I remember we were getting probably eight girls in a row. My mom, who was my coach at the time, turned to me and said, "Wanna give it a shot, Meg?" I was a shortstop at the time (you wouldn't know from my fielding now), but I figured hey, why not? I ran out to the mound and from then on the circle was my home.

As I have gotten older, my relationship with my position has been a rocky one. Some days I curse my mother for throwing me in that game when I was 10, but some of the most successful, yet rewarding positions in softball and baseball.

I have always had a hard time dealing with the blame. When your team loses a game, it doesn't say in the write up "losing shortstop" or "losing center fielder," it says "LP: Megan Hiler." Literally, it says that. Losing pitcher, Megan Hiler. Seeing that after every loss was like a personal slap in the face. I know, you win as a team, you lose as a team.

Yet when you give up a bomb over the center field fence, people aren't saying "I can't imagine my life without pitching. It brought me to Ferris State. It made me a Bulldog..."

Megan Hiler

"Hey, their first basemen blows, they should take her out." But they are saying, "Wow, that pitch was right down the pipe. Hiler needs to come out." And I always had trouble with that.

I've been called names from "Slingshot," "Legs" and "Meg11," to "scrawny," "Sticks" or "Little Meggy Hiler." But probably, the nickname I have been called most in my life is "Good Dammit Hiler." Has a nice ring to it, eh?

My coach in high school was the best coach I have ever had, Denny Dock. He is softball, too. Coach Dock treated us like players. He didn't care that we were girls and what not, he held us to the same standard. That guy knew what he was doing in Southwest Michigan. And boy, did he have some good one-liners.

One day when I was pitching, I threw a garbage curve ball. The hitter smashed it back up the middle, right into my shin. I went all the way down the dugout to throw her out, but I was down for the count. Coach then comes out and says to me, "Hiler! Are you okay?" "Yeah, coach. I just need a minute," being the tough chick I was. Then, I hid you not, he didn't throw it there, that wouldn't happen! I wiped my tears away, wiped the thumbs-

up and nodded. Classic. I could go on for hours about Coach Dock. Great coach, smart man and downright hilarious when I was in the dog house. Once, he just gave me his watch and told me run couldn't deal with in a half hour because he coaches as well and from day one, that was the case for me. You're in the middle of the field, so by default, you're a leader. The game doesn't continue until you throw the ball.

It is also the position that requires the most work. All athletes know the term "no days off" or "on that grind" but for us, it's her the days in high school when I would get done with basketball practice and go straight to pitching. There were definitely times where I thought, "Man, I should have been an outfielder!" when I was jumping off like Jet-O from the basketball court. It would have saved my poor dad some bumps and bruises from pitches that went awry or one happens he took off the legs catching for

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